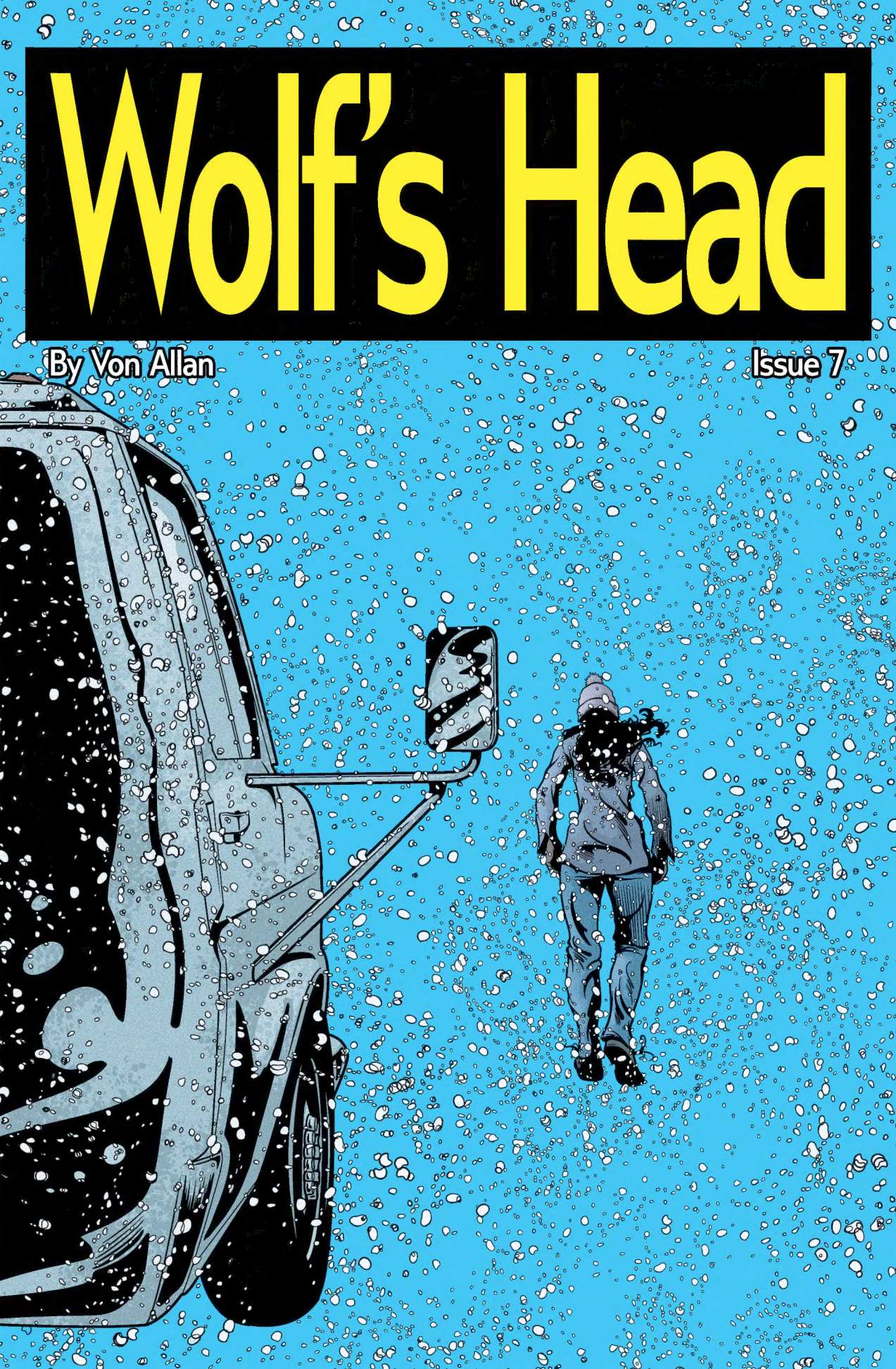
# Wolf's Head

By Von Allan

Issue 7



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By Von Allan

Edited by Sam Boswell

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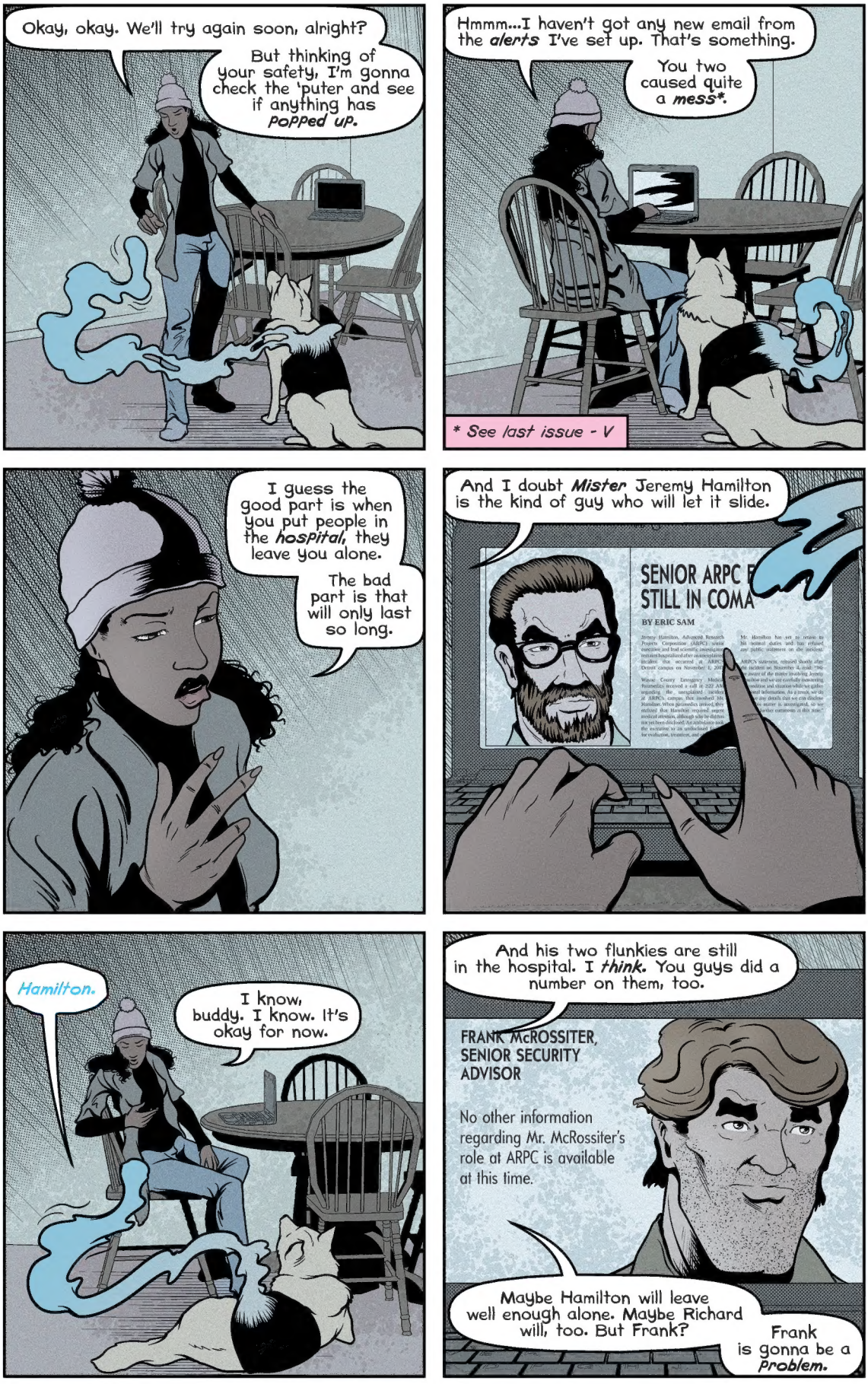
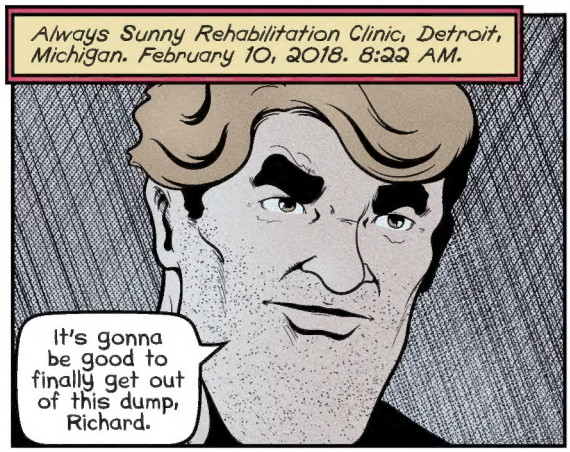
Published by Von Allan Studio, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.
Email: media@vonallan.com Web: https://www.vonallan.com

ISBN: 978-1-989885-06-2 (electronic)

An abandoned house in Detroit, Michigan. February 9th, 2018. 2:20 AM.
You two are amazing! Dog and sentient machine, working together! And you're lifting Sankó as if he doesn't weigh anything!
And you're doing it *without* even talking the same language?! How the hell have you two figured out how to do this?
Lauren!

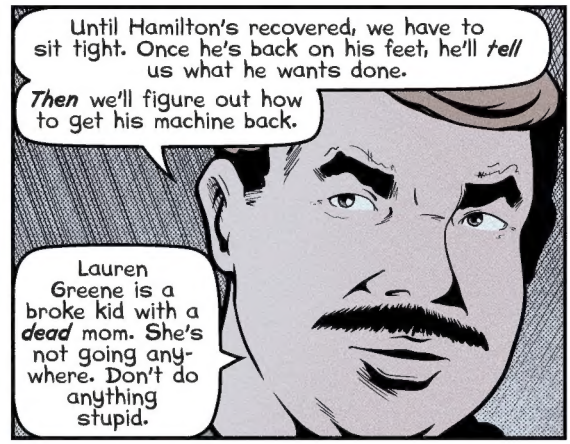
Okay, guys. My turn. Sankó, sit. Let's see now...
Alright, super machine. Something simple. Change into, I dunno, a blanket. Yeah! A blanket. Wrap me up!
C'mon! Wrap me up! You can do it!
Lauren.
Aaoooooo.
Nothing. Fuck!
We've been here for an hour trying stuff, you guys. You two can work together without speaking a word.
Even Mom was able to get you to do other stuff. You and me? It's like you don't even hear me.
What am I doing wrong? Or what are you two doing right? I don't get it.
Alright, it's late and it's cold. Enough for now. Let's go home.
If we could only work together. Train together. Communicate. You two are great, but what happens if someone finds out? Comes after you?
I don't want to lose you guys like I lost my mom.
We need to be able to work together reliably. But it's been months of failure. It sucks.
We got a lot of walking ahead of us. Man, I sure miss having my car. Or that truck I borrowed for a bit.
Lauren's apartment, 2 Guptill Street, Grassland Park, Michigan. 3:10 AM.
Shit, bills to pay and work's still unreliable.
Oh, c'mon guys.
We'll figure this out. We've been training for awhile now. We're just stuck. It'll be okay.
I just wish I knew more about you, machine. How do you do the things you do? Why can you still only say a few words?

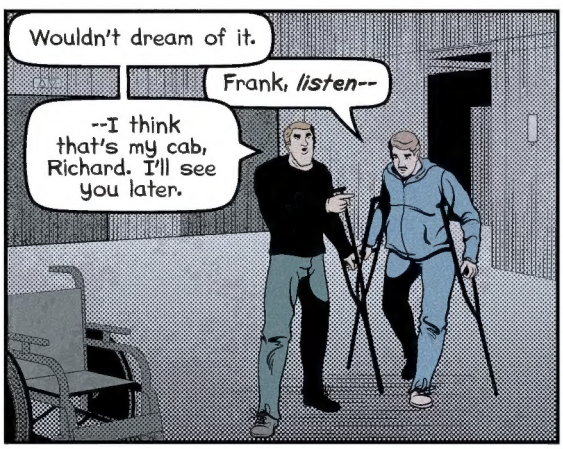

Okay, okay. We'll try again soon, alright?
But thinking of your safety, I'm gonna check the 'puter and see if anything has popped up.
Hmmm...I haven't got any new email from the alerts I've set up. That's something.
You two caused quite a mess*.
* See last issue - V
I guess the good part is when you put people in the hospital, they leave you alone.
The bad part is that will only last so long.
And I doubt Mister Jeremy Hamilton is the kind of guy who will let it slide.
SENIOR ARPC
STILL IN COMA
BY ERIC SAM
Hamilton.
I know, buddy. I know. It's okay for now.
And his two flunkies are still in the hospital. I think. You guys did a number on them, too.
FRANK McROSSITER, SENIOR SECURITY ADVISOR
No other information regarding Mr. McRossiter's role at ARPC is available at this time.
Maybe Hamilton will leave well enough alone. Maybe Richard will, too. But Frank?
Frank is gonna be a problem.

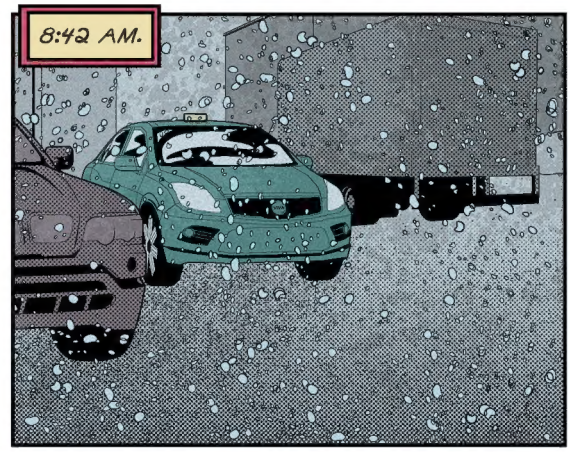

Always Sunny Rehabilitation Clinic, Detroit, Michigan. February 10, 2018. 8:22 AM.
It's gonna be good to finally get out of this dump, Richard.

Speak for yourself, Frank. You might be cleared to go home, but I'm not. And Hamilton isn't even close yet.
Fair enough. But doing rehab was getting on my nerves. Nice to get the hell out.
Your turn will come soon enough.

In the meantime, I've got some thinking to do.
'Thinking.' Uh-*huh*. I *know* what that means.

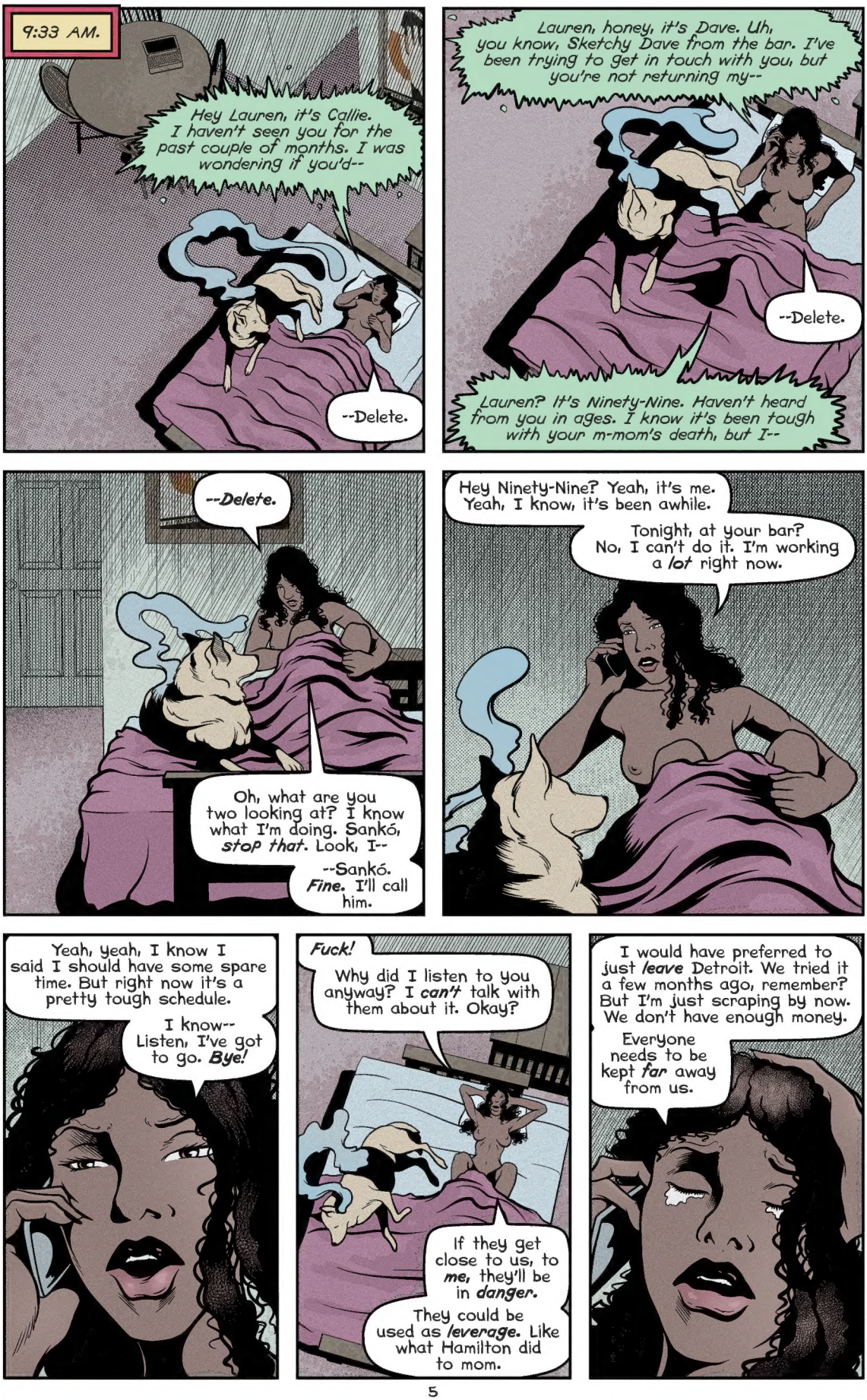

Until Hamilton's recovered, we have to sit tight. Once he's back on his feet, he'll *tell* us what he wants done.
*Then* we'll figure out how to get his machine back.
Lauren Greene is a broke kid with a *dead* mom. She's not going anywhere. Don't do anything stupid.


Wouldn't dream of it.
Frank, *listen*--
--I think that's my cab, Richard. I'll see you later.

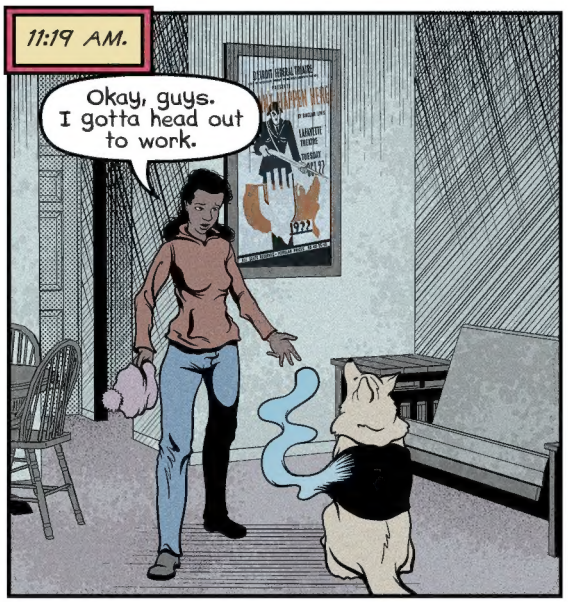

8:42 AM.

That bitch and her fucking dog. That fucking *machine*.
'Sit tight' my ass. I'm gonna *end* this.
What's that now?

Wasn't talkin' to you, asshole. Just drive.


9:33 AM.
Hey Lauren, it's Callie. I haven't seen you for the past couple of months. I was wondering if you'd--
--Delete.
Lauren, honey, it's Dave. Uh, you know, Sketchy Dave from the bar. I've been trying to get in touch with you, but you're not returning my--
--Delete.
Lauren? It's Ninety-Nine. Haven't heard from you in ages. I know it's been tough with your m-mom's death, but I--
--Delete.
Oh, what are you two looking at? I know what I'm doing. Sankó, stop that. Look, I--
--Sankó. Fine. I'll call him.
Hey Ninety-Nine? Yeah, it's me. Yeah, I know, it's been awhile.
Tonight, at your bar? No, I can't do it. I'm working a lot right now.
Yeah, yeah, I know I said I should have some spare time. But right now it's a pretty tough schedule.
I know-- Listen, I've got to go. Bye!
Fuck!
Why did I listen to you anyway? I can't talk with them about it. Okay?
If they get close to us, to me, they'll be in danger.
They could be used as leverage. Like what Hamilton did to mom.
I would have preferred to just leave Detroit. We tried it a few months ago, remember? But I'm just scraping by now. We don't have enough money.
Everyone needs to be kept far away from us.

Frank's condo, Metro Detroit. 9:58 AM.
One nice thing about working in high tech: this call is being bounced off three satellites and multiple relay stations. It might be traced, but it'll be a challenge.
Still, let's keep it short and fairly vague, okay?
It's a go. You have the photos and the other specifics already, right?
Good, good.
Alright. Now, you're aware of her background. She has training as a police officer. Yes, I realize that will require an extra fee. No problem.
And there is a dog. Yeah, it adds a complication. But she also has some hardware that will add more--
--difficulty.
I have a few thoughts on that.
Given your notoriety, transport is tricky. But I've arranged something and I'll be in touch with details soon.
What's that? Nah, no particular method is requested. I'll leave it to your discretion. The fewer details the better. The only request is the deadline.
Yup, that'll work. Within thirty days is just fine.


11:19 AM.
Okay, guys. I gotta head out to work.

It's a *snowy* day today. We can have some fun once I get back.
It's only a part-time shift today. Sucks for money, but at least I won't be gone too long. About four hours.

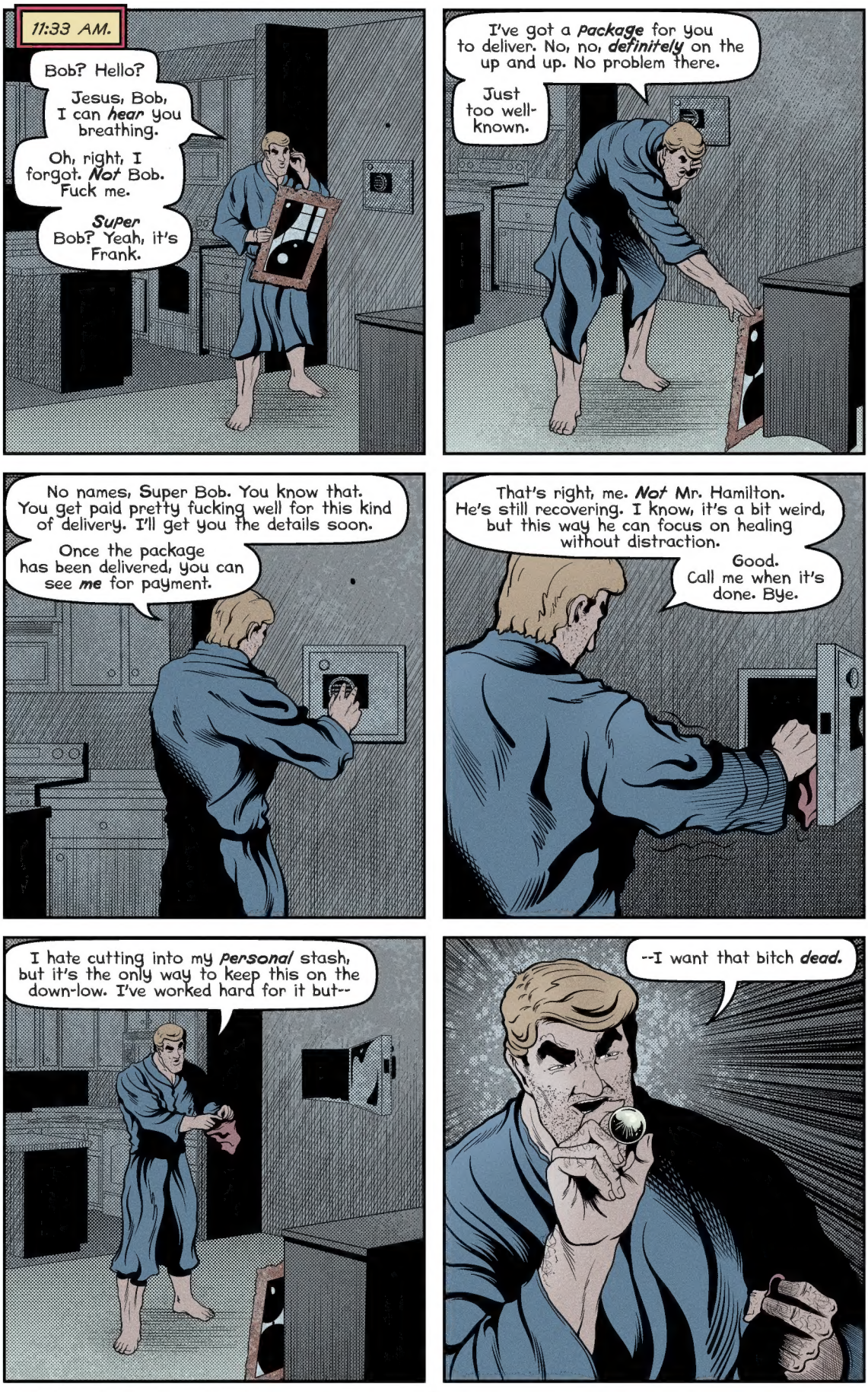
Don't you pee on the floor, Sankó!

Hi Mrs. Langer! I'm off to catch the bus for work!
Glad to hear you're still working. And you've been on time with your *rent* lately, too. Good for you.

I really thought we'd be *evicting* you last November, but you came through just as I was preparing the paperwork.
Good to be lucky, huh?

I suppose. The company doesn't like tenants disappearing when rent's due, but things have been good since.
I hate evicting people, but I'll do it in a *heartbeat* if you give me reason to, Ms. Greene.

I'll keep that in mind!
Do so!


11:33 AM.
Bob? Hello?
Jesus, Bob, I can hear you breathing.
Oh, right, I forgot. Not Bob. Fuck me.
Super Bob? Yeah, it's Frank.
I've got a package for you to deliver. No, no, definitely on the up and up. No problem there.
Just too well-known.
No names, Super Bob. You know that. You get paid pretty fucking well for this kind of delivery. I'll get you the details soon.
Once the package has been delivered, you can see me for payment.
That's right, me. Not Mr. Hamilton. He's still recovering. I know, it's a bit weird, but this way he can focus on healing without distraction.
Good. Call me when it's done. Bye.
I hate cutting into my personal stash, but it's the only way to keep this on the down-low. I've worked hard for it but--
--I want that bitch dead.

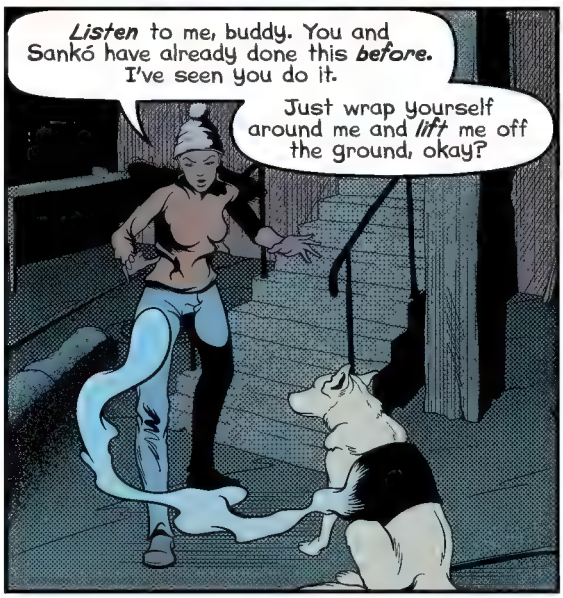
11:47 AM.
Fuck this snow.
Hey, Lauren! Just heading out to my bar and I spotted you. Need a lift?
Oh, *Ninety-Nine*. Hey. Hi. Uh--
--No, no, actually, I don't mind the snow. My bus will be here soon.
*Right.*
Have I done something?
*What?* No. I'd hate for you to think that. It's just--
Just?
*Stuff.*
Stuff.
Stuff that I *can't* talk about.
It's better for everybody if I just stay away.
Better for every--
--*what?* That doesn't make *any* sense.
What the hell's going on?
I'll-I'll tell you about it someday.
75 METRO
Uh, that's my bus. I gotta go.

Fuck.
12:19 PM.
Yeah, I just saw Lauren at the bus stop. It didn't go well. Something's up, but she ain't talking.
THREE EYES BAR
SB BACKER
Maybe she's having a hard time placing her mom's death, Ninety-Nine?
Yeah, Dave, I hear you. But her mom died back in October, almost four months ago.
But people heal at different rates.
I know, Callie. I know. But this is just so *strange.* I don't know what the hell's going on with her. She's cut everybody off.
I'm worried about her.
Yeah, me, too. I haven't even gone grocery shopping with her. Let alone anything else.
She sure as hell ain't getting laid, either, right?
Not with me, anyway.
Not with *anyone* I know. Not a good sign.
The holidays are tough on people. Maybe she found Christmas *harder* than we realized.
Man, I need a *break.* Haven't had one in years.
Too much shit to think about. It's bringing me down.

February 11th, 1:47 AM.
No, no, no!

Damn it! No!
Why the hell isn't this working, guys?

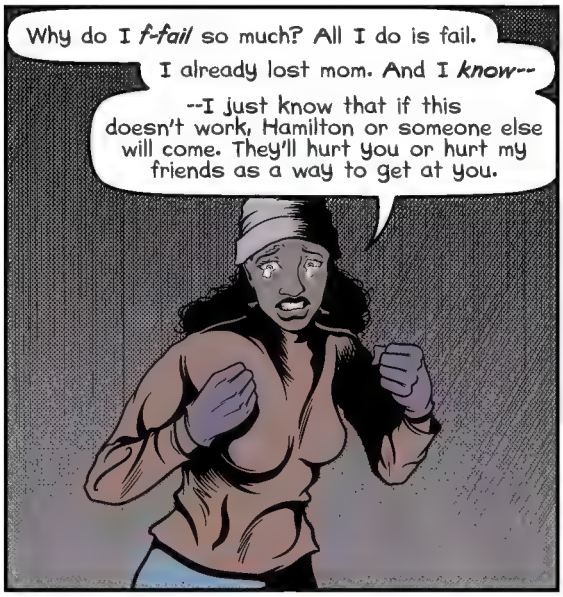
Being dropped on my ass is not fun.
Hopefully repetition will make this work, guys. Soooo... Let's try it again.


Listen to me, buddy. You and Sankó have already done this before. I've seen you do it.
Just wrap yourself around me and lift me off the ground, okay?

C'mon, that's it.
Exactly! Right on! Keep it going.

C'mon, c'mon! Just keep lifting me up. You have to hold my weight. Hold me--

--no! NO! Aaaargh--


Why do I *f-fail* so much? All I do is fail.
I already lost mom. And I *know*--
--I just know that if this doesn't work, Hamilton or someone else will come. They'll hurt you or hurt my friends as a way to get at you.

They'll take you away and *tear* you apart.
They'll take you, too, Sankó. They'll take *anyone* if they think it'll help them figure out how you work.

Make war. Kill people.

And I *can't* stop them.

I've tried so hard to keep everyone *away*. To keep them safe.
All while I keep you safe. While I learn to work with you.

But *this*--
--this *isn't* working the way I hoped it would. The way I *need* it to.

Guys, I need *help*. I'm not trained to do this. I don't have the 'know-how' to talk with you. Work with you.

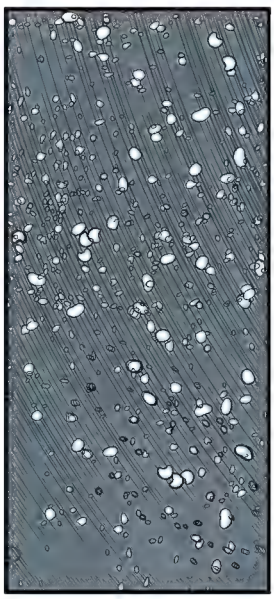
And you're just a *baby*, like mom said.
♫ Lauren. ♪
Aoooooooo.

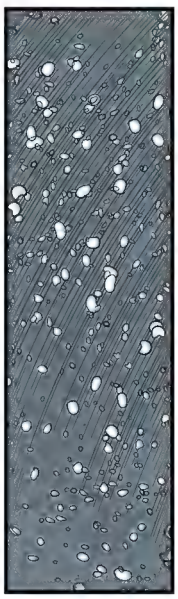
I think what I've been doing is the wrong way to go. I need to *talk* with someone.
Someone who knows about artificial intelligence, but *isn't* tied to Hamilton or his stupid Advanced Research Projects Corporation.
Preferably someone who *hates* ARPC as much as we do.

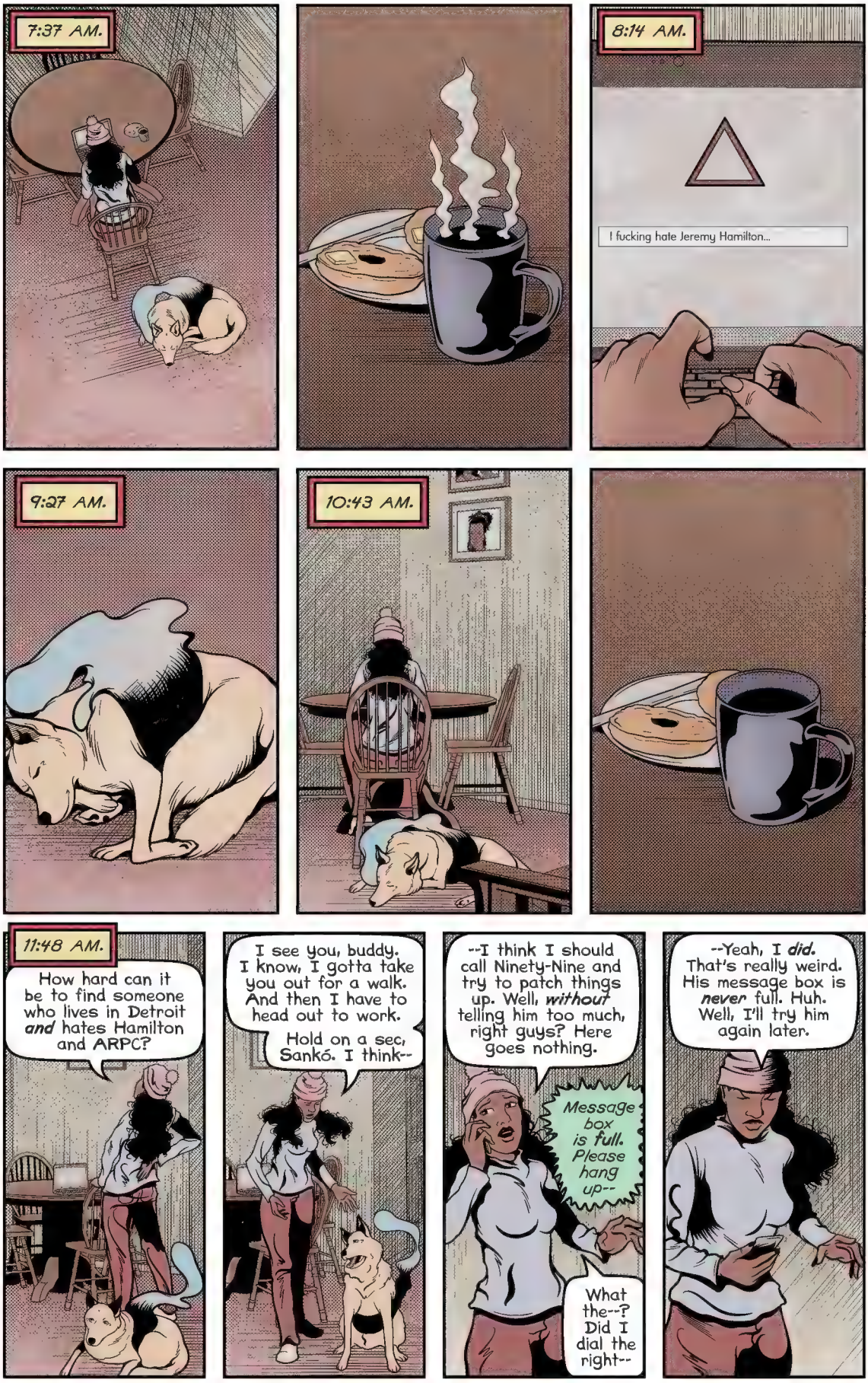
C'mon, let's get *out* of here.
I've got some *research* to do.
Yip, yip!

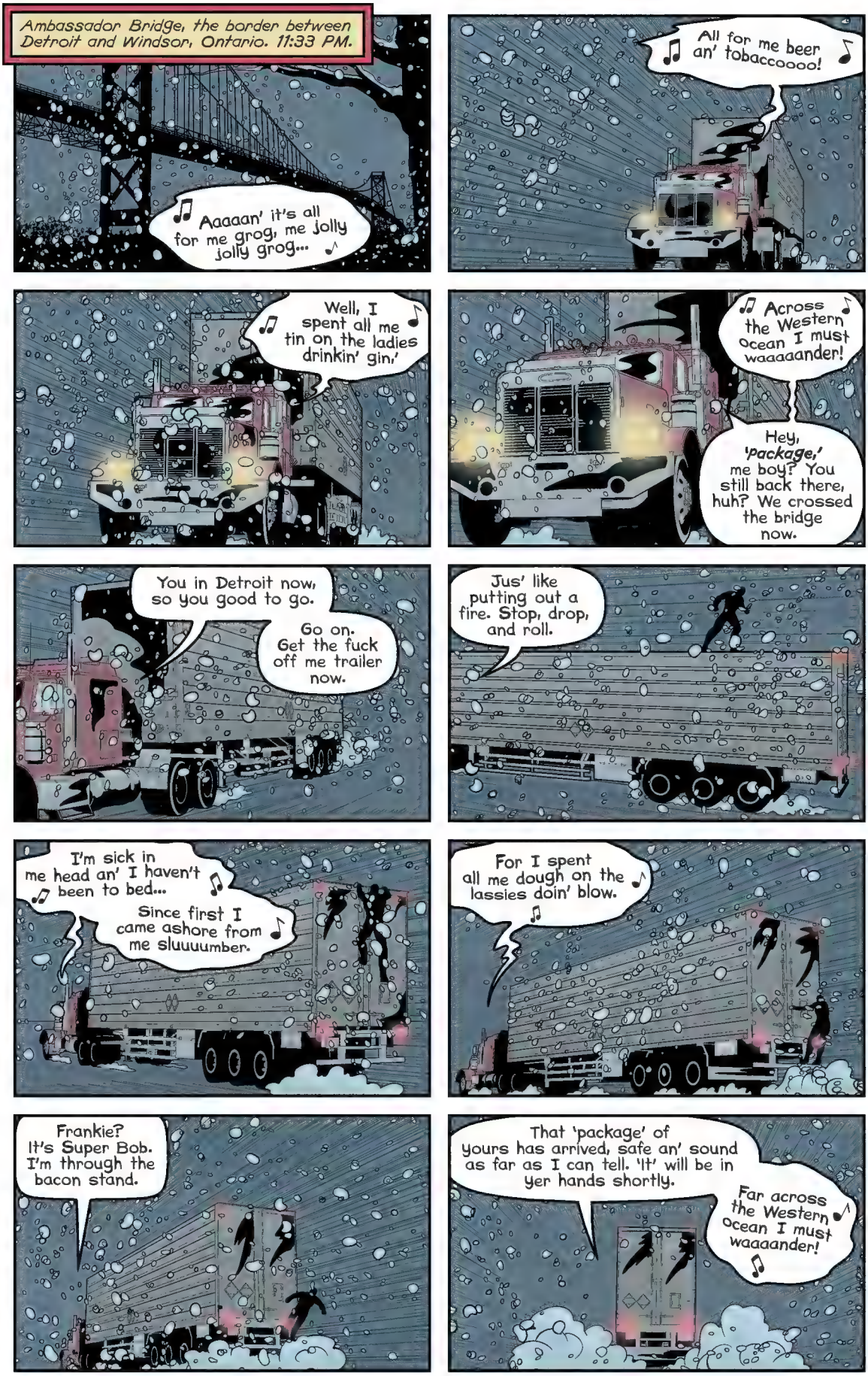
We're gonna get this figured out, buddy.

We'll solve it. *Together*.
♫ Lauren. Sankó. ♫






7:37 AM.
8:14 AM.
I fucking hate Jeremy Hamilton...
9:27 AM.
10:43 AM.
11:48 AM.
How hard can it be to find someone who lives in Detroit *and* hates Hamilton and ARPC?
I see you, buddy. I know, I gotta take you out for a walk. And then I have to head out to work.
Hold on a sec, Sankō. I think--
--I think I should call Ninety-Nine and try to patch things up. Well, *without* telling him too much, right guys? Here goes nothing.
*Message box is **full.** Please hang up--*
What the--? Did I dial the right--
--Yeah, I *did.* That's really weird. His message box is *never* full. Huh. Well, I'll try him again later.


Ambassador Bridge, the border between Detroit and Windsor, Ontario. 11:33 PM.
Aaaaan' it's all for me grog, me jolly jolly grog...
All for me beer an' tobaccoooo!
Well, I spent all me tin on the ladies drinkin' gin,'
Across the Western ocean I must waaaaander!
Hey, 'package,' me boy? You still back there, huh? We crossed the bridge now.
You in Detroit now, so you good to go.
Go on. Get the fuck off me trailer now.
Jus' like putting out a fire. Stop, drop, and roll.
I'm sick in me head an' I haven't been to bed...
Since first I came ashore from me sluuuumber.
For I spent all me dough on the lassies doin' blow.
Frankie? It's Super Bob. I'm through the bacon stand.
That 'package' of yours has arrived, safe an' sound as far as I can tell. 'It' will be in yer hands shortly.
Far across the Western ocean I must waaaander!

February 12th, 2018.
1:05 PM.

Hamilton and ARPC fuck over pretty much *everybody* at some point. How hard can it be to find some techie who hates them?

2:38 PM.

Wait a sec, wait a sec!

This might be *it!*

## LAYOFFS LEAD TO VIOLENCE

During a round of layoffs in May 2001, ARPC laid off approximately 15% of their workforce.

In Detroit after the layoff announcement became public, an outbreak of workplace violence occurred outside the company's main factor. Security personnel were heavi[illegible] involved.

A company spokesperson reported that ARPC will be laying criminal mischief charges against Jack Dhillon, a 31 year old Computer Hardware Engineer who was terminated in the recent round of layoffs.

*Finally!* Okay, okay. Now, what are the odds this guy is still around? If ARPC went after him, maybe he couldn't find work.

If he's still in Detroit, what would he be doing now? Huh. That's gonna take some digging.

I'll check that later, right guys? For now, let me try Ninety-Nine again.

*Message box is full. Please hang--*

Okay, that's getting *really* weird.

No way he lets something like that happen. For staff scheduling at his bar, he needs to be easy to reach.

*Something's* going on.

You guys stay here. I'm going down to the *bar.*

Be good, guys. I won't be long!

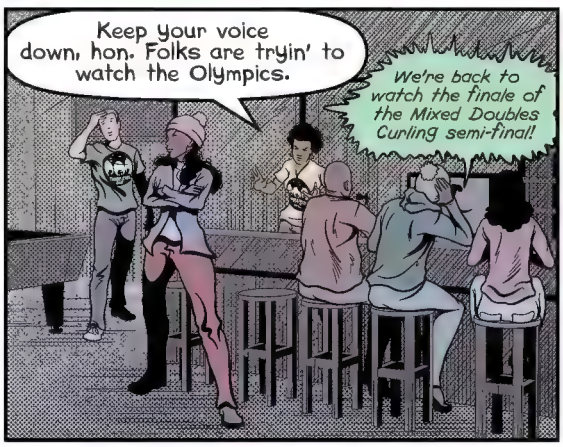
I'm a 'bad friend'?

Really?!

REALLY?

You have *no idea* what I'm going through. No idea what I'm trying to fucking do here!

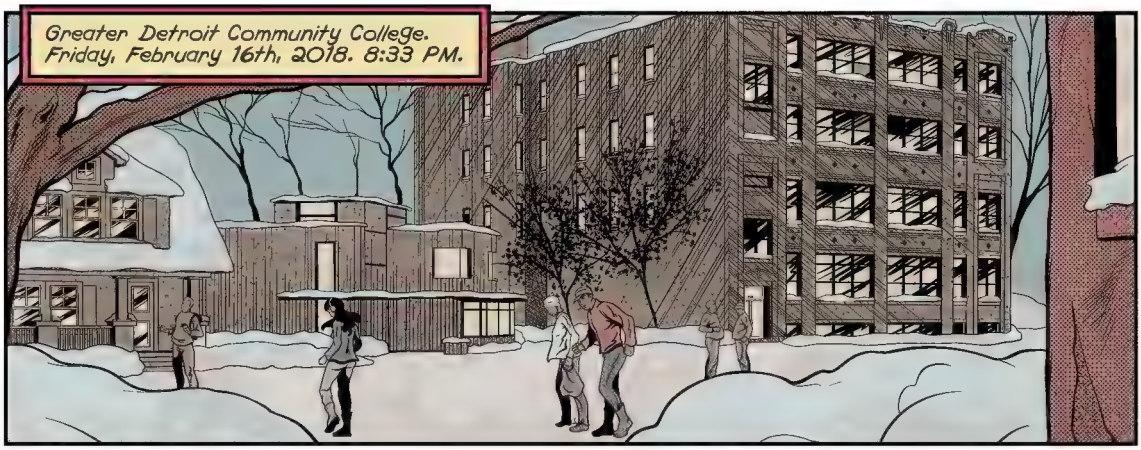
You don't know *anything*, but you're still piling on? Go *fuck* yourself, Callie.



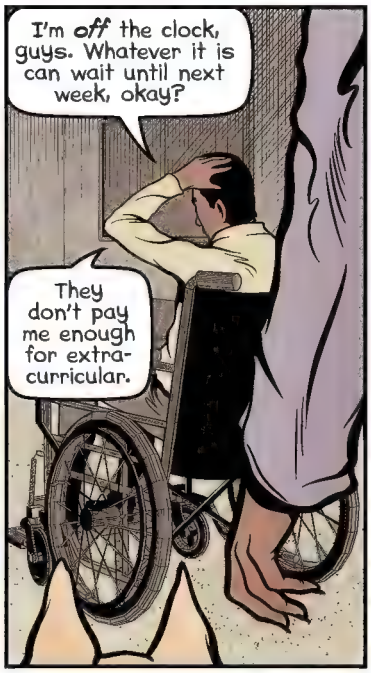
Don't get all in my face, Lauren. Ninety-Nine's tried to talk with you.
We've *all* tried to talk with you.
All we've gotten back is *static*.
Not a good way to treat your friends.
Friends who've tried hard to *help* you.
Don't need the guilt trips, Callie.
Dave? Say *something* to the girl.
We all love you, Lauren, and we've tried to give you space. But man, the last few months have been hard.
Don't you think I know that?
We don't know *what* you think. That's the whole point, hon.
Just tell me where Ninety-Nine went.
He's *gone*. On *vacation*. It's the first one he's had since he set up the bar years ago.
But his phone?
He wanted to disconnect from everything, Lauren. And *everyone*.
But he didn't tell me.
Oh, *please*. What did you expect?!
I don't know. But something *more* than this.

10:38 PM.
These are one-ounce American Gold Eagles, Super Bob. The gold is guaranteed by the ol' US of A government.
One coin should fetch about $1,400 on the open market.
Don't I know it. Sure as hell adds a nice margin to my regular trucking salary.
Hope the 'package' works out. Corporate espionage ain't never easy to solve, but I'm sure you'll get yer goods back.
It's a pain in the ass. When it's all over, I'll need you to return the package over the border. You okay with that?
'Course. I'll cool my heels. Should be able to pick up some short-haul contracts in Michigan while waitin'.
You know my deal. I don't talk wit' the package, but I sure as hell like to know what I'm putting my neck out for.
You guys getting back some stolen property is a-ok wit' me.
Good! When it's finished, I'll call you and we can arrange for pick-up.
10:56 PM.
Soon.

11:26 PM.
I think I *fucked* it up, guys.
I don't know when Ninety-Nine will be back. When he gets back from *wherever* the hell he's gone, I think I'm going to *tell* him what's going on.
Maybe I should tell them *all* what's going on.
I need help with all of this.
Help with *you*, little buddy.
♪ Lauren. ♫
Speaking of which, there's one good piece of news. Mr. Dhillon is *still* in town.
I'm guessing ARPC went out of their way to make sure he *didn't* work in high tech again.
Our guy here is *teaching* at the community college. Has been for about *twenty* years.
I *think* that means he's no friend of Hamilton. He's kept a pretty low profile since he was fired--
Aaaaooo.
--but there's no way to know for sure. At least right now. I'm gonna have to do some more *research* on this guy.
Try and figure out *where* he stands.
♫ Lauren.
Ruff.
But maybe, if he checks out, he's worth talking to.
Arf, Arf!
I'll know soon enough.


Greater Detroit Community College.
Friday, February 16th, 2018. 8:33 PM.

That's it, that's all, folks. See you next week.
Thanks, teach.
Knock, knock.


I'm *off* the clock, guys. Whatever it is can wait until next week, okay?
They don't pay me enough for extra-curricular.

Excuse me, are you Jack Dhillon?
I said *next* week.
Actually, I'm not one of your students.

I was hoping to get a few minutes of your time.
Uh-*huh*. My time *isn't* free.
Yeah, well, I'd be lying if I said I could make it worth your while.

You *aren't* exactly selling yourself, lady. This is community college and I'm *barely* an adjunct.
About the only thing that gets my attention is *money*.

How about *revenge*?

Next!
Lauren has tracked down a guy who might help her learn about the AI. But will he? And what about Frank's plans? And who's this 'Super' Bob Sanchez fella, anyway? All this and more will be revealed in a tale that could only be called...
THE SAGE.

2
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# Wolf Tales

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In the last couple of issues I've shown some of the redraws I've done for my first graphic novel ***the road to god knows…*** as a result of my involvement in ***I AM STILL YOUR CHILD,*** a documentary film. I thought I'd share a bit more about that whole journey.

***The road to god knows…*** was published in October 2009 after about four years of development. The story dealt with a young teenager's struggle to cope with her mom's schizophrenia. It's pretty autobiographical; to tell the story, I drew on a lot of my own experiences with my mom's struggle with schizophrenia. It's fictional for all kinds of reasons, but the main one was that I wanted some distance from the story.

That said, the graphic novel was self-published and, art-wise, it's *rough*. I think there was a lot of heart to it, but my visual art was pretty weak. Figure-drawing problems, perspective problems, composition problems, value/shading problems...you name a problem and ***road*** had it.

In spades.

I came to art very late and learning to draw is *not* the easiest thing in the world to do. Comics require a great deal of knowledge to do well. Those problems I mentioned? Well, you need everything to work together extremely well to create a comic. If that harmony *isn't* there...well, you get a pretty rough comic. And that certainly was an issue with ***road***. But we learn by doing and I'm still proud, to this day, that I managed to do it. Rough spots and all.

So I published it and it did as well as could be expected, especially given my art skills at the time. And though it still sold a bit every year, I stopped thinking about it. I moved on with my life, continued to make art and comics, continued to get stronger, and put that rough first graphic novel behind me.

Flash forward to April 2015 and I received an email out of the blue from a writer/director named Megan Durnford. She was working on a documentary film about the impact of parental mental illness and wanted to talk with me about ***road***. To make a long story short, the film was made (amazing!) and I was a part of it (shocking!). And it was made with empathy and sensitivity; and it deals with an issue that really isn't discussed much in public at all. I was (and am) very pleased to be included in the film.

The making of the documentary led to an interesting situation. Megan wanted to use artwork from ***the road to god knows...*** in the documentary. And...that was not good. I hadn't looked at the art in a number of years and, when I revisited it, I was dismayed (maybe horrified would be a better word). The art was rough. Really, really rough. And it put me in a bind; I didn't want to have ***road*** represent where I am *now*. That may sound weird; I think it did with the folks involved in the film. But because the graphic novel was such a personal project for me and because my art had certainly improved quite a bit from back then, the idea of seeing *that* old art in a documentary left me cold.

So we worked out an interesting solution. I would revisit ***road*** and redraw selected pages and panels from the graphic novel that Megan wanted to include in the film. As it turns out, that was one helluva big job.

Some of the work was emotional; I was revisiting themes, that in some ways, I didn't want to revisit. For example, I was revisiting the death of my mom; the graphic novel is pretty autobiographical and while my mom died long before it was ever published, her presence is a big part of of the story for me.

Some of the work was practical; in order to keep the pages similar, I had to stay pretty close to how I did things almost a decade ago, even though I would not necessarily write or draw the same way now. That wasn't easy; how I approach composition is different now. My thoughts on how a comic book page is put together is different now. How I write is different now. And on and on. Plus there was that pesky fact that the original art was pretty rough. I could use it as a guideline, really a very loose thumbnail, but that's it. I would have to draw most of it from scratch, as if it was a brand new story.

The actual redrawn art presented another problem. By redrawing the art, I could accidentally give the impression that the new art is what the graphic novel actually looks like. I felt a little sick when that dawned on me, so the solution was to *avoid* it completely by making the graphic novel out of print. I realize that there are still a few copies "out there," but it's fortunately not so easy to find and hopefully anyone who sees the documentary (along with the caveat about the art in the film credits) will understand.

It's one of those weird situations that is almost counter-intuitive; in a way, the documentary has brought more attention to ***the road to god knows...*** then ever before. But to redraw the entire graphic novel (to "fix it" if you will) would be a monumental undertaking. Even with the redraws I did for the documentary, I only wound up touching something like 10% of the book. To redraw the rest would require...well, certainly a very keen and excited publisher.

For me to do that other 90%? Nope. Tempting, but nope. I would rather go forward than backward.

Given all that, the redraws represent an interesting and fairly poignant "what if." What if I hadn't published the graphic novel when I did? What if the entire graphic novel looked the way the redraws do? Would it have found a broader audience? Would it have found a publisher?

What if?

Ultimately, who knows? We learn by doing. I did the best work I could on ***the road to god knows...*** back in 2005-2009. That the work wasn't *the* best is unfortunate, but that's life. If I hadn't done it, would I have given up on art by now? Who knows? Do I regret doing it? No, but I'd be lying if I didn't say that I wish the art in the original version was stronger. It was hard to revisit on that point alone.

You may note, by the by, that I don't say that I've gotten *better*. Better, in art and in life, is a judgment call that's difficult to make. Who's to say? What is better?

But I know that I have gotten *stronger*. And that's enough.

It is pretty amazing to find that ***road*** still touches people, enough to be included in a documentary almost eight years after it was published. Enough that the book is still talked about today. I occasionally get emails, like the one I received from Megan back in the spring of 2015. And, despite my misgivings, I'm happy the book keeps touching people, even in its rough form.

And ***road***, despite its flaws, taught me one thing. I love to draw. I wish I had found that out earlier, but I know it now. And that's not nothing. Ω

- Von Allan
Ottawa, Ontario

## POSTSCRIPT

It's always a bit weird to be writing this, but here goes. I'm one of the winners of a CBC Trailblazer Award. With a trophy and everything! I have to admit to having mixed feelings about awards, but it's still pretty neat to have won one. And since this is the *second* award I've won for my art-related activities, it is another "arrow in the quiver," especially given how hard it's been to get to this point.

Hard? Hell, yeah.

Art, as a career, is not the easiest thing in the world to make a "go" of, especially given the austerity-fueled times we live in. And it has taken me a long time, longer than I would have liked, to reach the point that my art is, for lack of a better word, "professional." 'Course, one of the interesting things about art is that the word "professional" can take on all kinds of different meanings. It really depends on who you are and what you like.

One of the interesting things about the Trailblazer Award is that it's really recognition for the work I continue to do around my very *first* graphic novel, ***the road to god knows...***

Who knew, when I first self-published it almost ten years ago, that it would still be finding a life now? That's in large part thanks to ***I AM STILL YOUR CHILD,*** written and directed by Megan Durnford. The film gave a "second life," so to speak, to the graphic novel and has led to speaking engagements, panel discussions, Skype conversations, and on and on.

And, more concretely, it's given me an opportunity to talk about my mom. Not just her battle with schizophrenia, but also the poverty we battled combined with the lack of social programs to help her. To talk about the immense courage she showed (courage I've really only become truly aware of as an adult) while she fought a lonely and often terrifying battle to navigate a truly unforgiving healthcare and social aid system. And what it was like to grow up with her, for both good and ill.

It's funny; my mom died pretty young, at 48. And I'm slowly but surely approaching that age myself. In fact, I've now lived longer *without* her in my life than I did with her (she died when I was 20, and I'm now well-past 40 myself). But the memory of her

stays with me still. That's partially because I loved her, of course, but also because I still think, to this day, how unfair her situation was. And the fact that it never had to be that way.

Despite all of the "by your own bootstraps" nonsense we live in (you know, that idea that any failure, let alone any health issue, is a sign of personal failure rather than societal), what happened to my mom was grossly unfair. What is heartbreaking to me is that the unfairness she experienced is *still* experienced by so many other people right to this very day.

Yeah, yeah, awareness about mental health and mental illness is better. There's more open and frank discussion around it. Sure. But poverty has not gone away. The lack of social support really hasn't changed. Welfare rates for anyone (let alone single moms) have, if anything, gotten much worse. We can talk about "resilience" and "perseverance" as much as we'd like. We can even point to individuals who've managed to do just that, but what about those who can't? There's still a chronic lack of *systemic* support. There's still a culture that desperately needs healing (don't believe me? Look at the suicides that are still occurring in the wake of the Parkland shooting).

I'm pleased to do what I can to help. And I'm proud, damn proud, to talk about my mom. To help put a face on what otherwise might be simple dry statistics. To use my art, as best I can, to show what some of this is like. But it's hard not to escape the idea that in a very real way, the 2019 Trailblazer Award should *not* have gone to me.

It really should have gone to my mom.

She died in 1994, alone and isolated. I had moved out some months before because I had to, for my own mental health.

What I try to stress to people, though, is that she had hopes and dreams. Things she still wanted to accomplish. Who knows what she might have done if she had managed to beat a truly vile disease and get healthier? She'd be almost 74 as I write this, probably feisty as all get out, and probably telling her own story to people, trailblazing change.

I don't doubt that for a second. But it was not to be.

I placed, a long time ago, the grief along with the disappointment of what could have been. It is what it is and it happened a long time ago. But other people, right now, are going through similar things. And even if mental illness is not a part of it, there is still crushing poverty, a cold and often hostile health and social services system, kids going hungry, massive personal debts, and horrible unhappiness. All the celebratory economic statistics in the world can't change that. There is a lack of solidarity with each other, not just with our fellow citizens but a lack of solidarity and fellowship with people around the globe (don't believe me? Look at all the hate against immigrants and refugees we're seeing now).

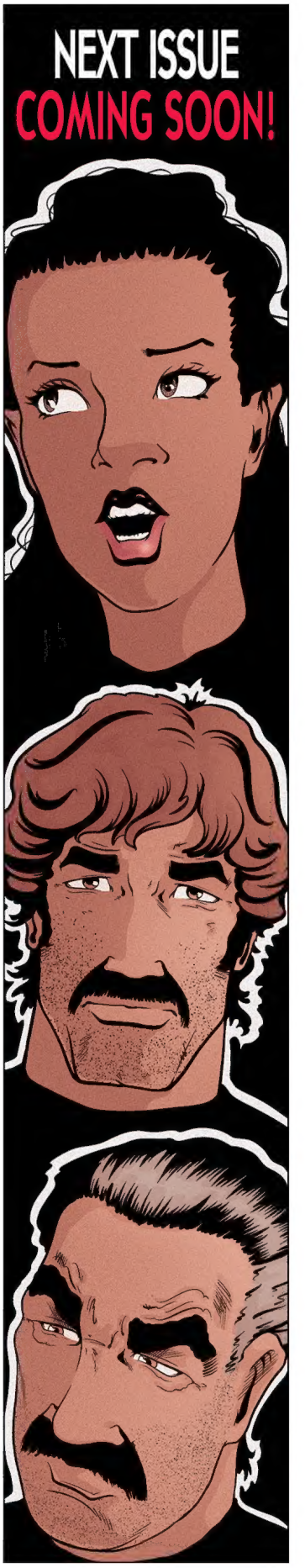
We have to overcome this.

And what about me? Well, I continue to grow and get stronger, especially with my art (both visual art and my writing, too). And, with my art, I try to not just focus on the past (though always to honour it) but to move forward with new stories and new adventures. One of the things about falling in love with art, with comics, and with visual storytelling, is that the growing and learning never stops.

Using comics to tell stories has been, I think, the most rewarding thing I've done as an adult. And I can still remember where I was when the journey started to where I am now. Harder than hell, yeah, but rewarding all the same.

I can't wait to see what happens next. Ω

- Von Allan
Ottawa, Ontario



# The Sage!

***LAUREN GREENE*** IS A YOUNG DETROIT WOMAN WHOSE LIFE IS TURNED UPSIDE DOWN AFTER HER MOM SAVES A NEWBORN LIFE-FORM, A KIND OF ***ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE*** (AI), FROM A SECRETIVE CORPORATION THAT INTENDED TO USE THE POWERFUL BABY FOR WAR.

WHEN HER MOM DIES, LAUREN IS LEFT ALONE TO FIGURE OUT WHAT TO DO WITH THE NEW LIFE-FORM... WHILE ***ALSO*** TRYING TO MAKE ENDS MEET IN HER REAL LIFE.

DESPERATE FOR HELP, SHE HAS REACHED OUT TO EX-SCIENTIST, ***JACK DHILLON.*** LAUREN HOPES THAT DHILLON WILL TEACH HER TO WORK WITH THE AI, BUT CAN SHE CONVINCE HIM TO HELP?

## Terrific stars include...

**SUPER BOB SANCHEZ!** A TRUCKER WHO IS ***NOT*** (UNDER ***ANY*** CIRCUMSTANCE!) A HERO!

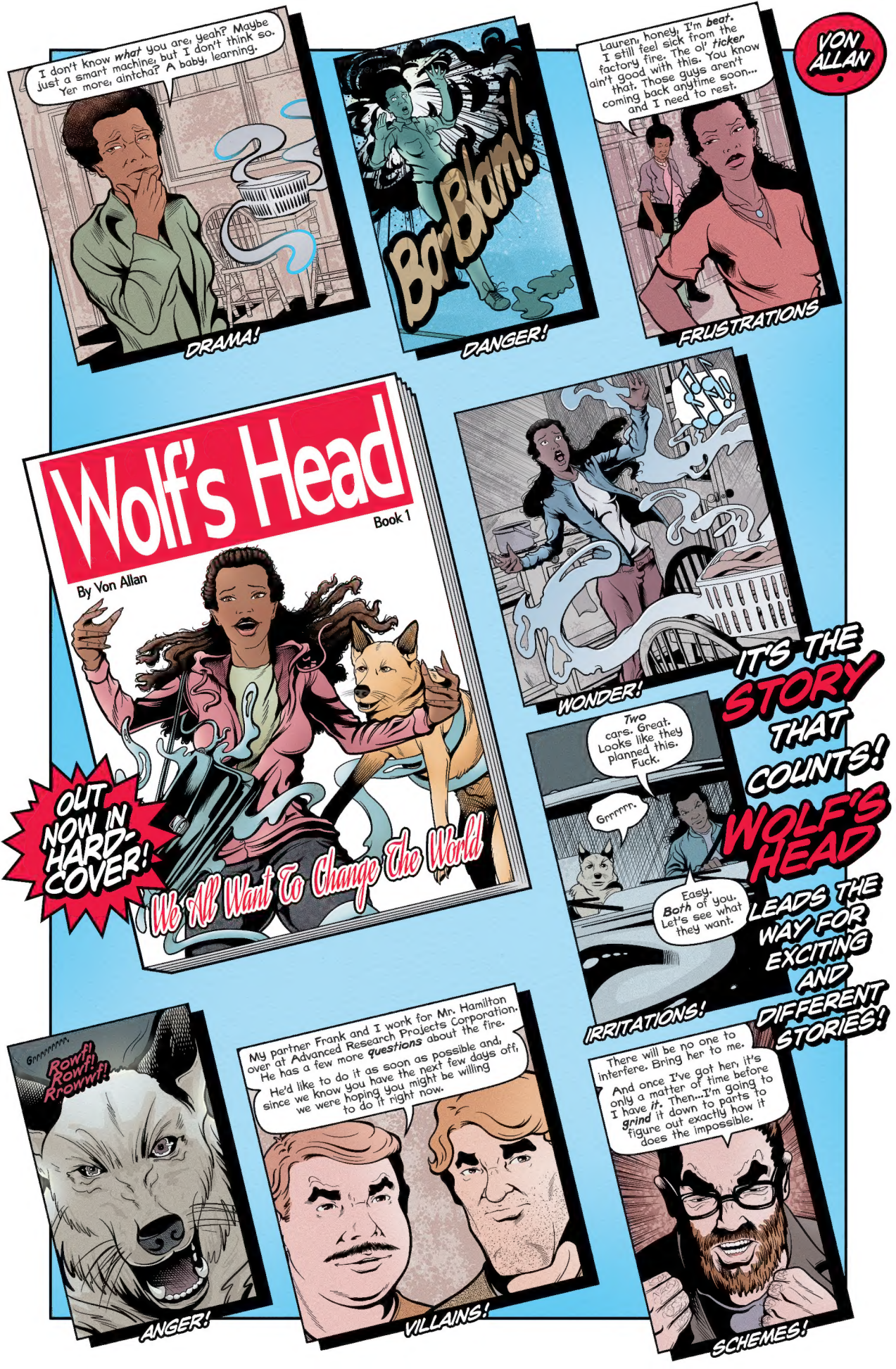
**JACK DHILLON!** AN EX-SCIENTIST WITH A PERSONAL ***HATRED*** FOR THE AI'S CREATOR!

**THE MACHINE!** A ***SHAPE-CHANGING*** AI WITH A HEART OF GOLD!

**SANKO!** A DOG WHO ***LOVES*** LAUREN AND THE AI!

## All in... WOLF'S HEAD!

OUT SOON!


VON ALLAN
I don't know *what* you are, yeah? Maybe just a smart machine, but I don't think so. Yer more, aintcha? A baby, learning.
DRAMA!
Ba-Blam!
DANGER!
Lauren, honey. I'm *beat*. I still feel sick from the factory fire. The ol' *ticker* ain't good with this. You know that. Those guys aren't coming back anytime soon... and I need to rest.
FRUSTRATIONS
Wolf's Head
Book 1
By Von Allan
We All Want To Change The World
OUT NOW IN HARD-COVER!
WONDER!
IT'S THE STORY THAT COUNTS!
WOLF'S HEAD LEADS THE WAY FOR EXCITING AND DIFFERENT STORIES!
*Two* cars. Great. Looks like they planned this. Fuck.
Grrrrrr.
Easy. *Both* of you. Let's see what they want.
IRRITATIONS!
Grrrrrrrrr.
Rowf! Rowf! Rrowwf!
ANGER!
My partner Frank and I work for Mr. Hamilton over at Advanced Research Projects Corporation. He has a few more *questions* about the fire.
He'd like to do it as soon as possible and, since we know you have the next few days off, we were hoping you might be willing to do it right now.
VILLAINS!
There will be no one to interfere. Bring her to me.
And once I've got her, it's only a matter of time before I have *it*. Then...I'm going to *grind* it down to parts to figure out exactly how it does the impossible.
SCHEMES!

https://wolfs-head.vonallan.com

The poster in Lauren's apartment (the Detroit Federal Theatre Project's poster of Sinclair Lewis' "It Can't Happen Here"), was created by the Works Progress Administration and is part of the Work Projects Administration Poster Collection (Library of Congress). This work is in the public domain in the United States because it was prepared by an officer or employee of the United States Government as part of that person's official duties under the terms of Title 17, Chapter 1, Section 101 and 105 of the US Code.

Further information regarding the Detroit Federal Theatre Project's poster of Sinclair Lewis' "It Can't Happen Here" can be found at http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/98513193/.